



The circling vultures cast their shadows across my desk.



Chaz

 [cvillette](https://cvillette.livejournal.com/)

<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>

2008-02-20 08:08:00

MOOD: 😊 dignified.

MUSIC: Black Rebel Motorcycle Club - Weapon of Choice (earworm version)

When you peel a sweet potato, you can smell the soil it grew in. Isn't that awesome? I can stand in my itty bitty kitchen and smell the dirt in Georgia or California or Mexico or Chile.

I mostly cook with ingredients in as close to their original state as I can. Easier to keep track of what I'm eating that way, and hey, fun!

But plans change, unexpected unexpectedness arises, and sometimes you need to make dinner in twenty minutes with little or no advance notice. When that happens, you still want it to not suck.

Times like that, here's one of the things I do.

You need:

olive oil (I <3 Popeye's girlfriend)

a big sweet potato

an onion

a can of black beans

frozen whole-kernel corn

salsa, homemade or store-bought

other herbs and seasonings

cooked rice

If you're making white rice, start it now. I make a ton of brown rice at the beginning of the week, so I grab a me-appropriate serving out of the container in the fridge, put it in a bowl, and set it aside.

Peel the sweet potato and cut into bite-sizeish cubes. (Actual size depends on how much time you have. Small pieces cook faster!) Coat the bottom of your big cast-iron frying pan (or your equivalent) with oil, get it heating on the stove. Throw the cubed

sweet potato in, cover, and let it cook. Stir occasionally.

While the sweet potato is softening up, cut the onion into nice chunky bits, about the size of the first joint of your finger. (If you have fresh garlic and you're speedy with your big chef's knife, you can slice about four garlic cloves, too. Unless you're uncertain about the appropriateness of residual garlic relative to whatever you're hurrying dinner for, in which case, don't.) I like spicy, so I also got out the jar of serrano peppers, snagged out a medium-size one, pushed some of the inside pith and seeds out with the point of my knife, and chopped it up fine. That's optional, though.

Check the sweet potatoes. Have they turned a little more golden and a little less red, and are firm but not crispy? Add the onion (and pepper and garlic, if you chopped those). Dollop on garlic powder (if you didn't use the fresh garlic), oregano, and cumin to suit you. (Remember, the oregano flavor wakes up as it heats, so don't underestimate its mighty power.) Sautee until the onions are translucent.

Add about three or four tablespoons of salsa, depending on the hotness of the salsa and your passion for scoville units (the measure of pepper hotness!) and stir into the other things. I make my own salsa, usually, and try to always have some in the fridge. You can also buy other people's fresh salsa. But for when you're caught totally flat-footed, it's nice to have a jar in the cupboard. There are lots of good store-bought ones, and the best ones aren't even the most expensive. Check the labels on some of the supermarket brands, looking for as few hard-to-identify and unpronounceable ingredients as possible. (My favorite storebought salsa is a supermarket label made with chipotle peppers. Mmmm, smoked hot peppers!)

Now for the frozen corn--about a cup's worth--and the can of black beans, with their liquid. Now simmer! simmer! okay! with the cover on the pan. You won't really have time to simmer it long enough to age and blend the flavors, but that's not what this is about.

If you've got pre-made rice, pop it in the microwave and nuke it for 30 seconds to a minute. After a minute or so of simmering, fork out a chunk of sweet potato and make sure it's done. If it is, serve over rice and eat!

Failure mode: burning. But you're not going to do that, because you don't have time to let it cook that long, right? You might have time to start the sweet potatoes cooking and then dash away to

do something else, thinking you will be more efficient that way. But that's why I told you to start chopping the onions instead. (Do not--NOT, I say!--crank the heat up under it thinking to make it cook faster. That will result in undesirable blackened food! and heartache! and stopping at a drive-thru!)

This makes two big filling servings for the non-metabolically challenged, or one serving for me that's just the right size when I'm a little too nervous to eat as much as I otherwise would. After all, in a hurry, remember?

This is another thing my grad school office mate and I would eat. (Assignments to grade, papers to finish, bands playing in town...the life of a grad student is always intense.) I tried to convince him it was an authentic traditional American southwestern regional specialty. He laughed and laughed, even though I told him commercial canning dates back to the mid-nineteenth century.

TAGS: [recipes](#)



Three things!

1) Okay, O., She Wants Revenge = yes. It's like the Eighties rose up from the grave and came looking

Experimental Whole Wheat Green Chile Robot Bread #1

Yes, baking with your hands is more fun. And the results have a better texture, and taste better.

[locked] Dream Journal

All right, unconscious mind. We're coming to an accommodation. If the dreams are you cleaning

37 comments

 [dremiel](#)

[February 20 2008, 15:46:36 UTC](#)

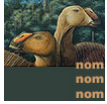
[COLLAPSE](#)

Hey, you stole my recipe. Oh wait, yeah, traditional. If you have the luxury of a few more minutes it is very nice to do all this in the bottom of a pressure cooker and then, instead of simmering, add about three cups of stock and bring it to pressure for 3-5 minutes.

Ta Da! Soup!

Mmmm, Soup!

ETA; Also, chipotle in adobo!



 [cvillette](#)

[February 20 2008, 19:33:09 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Let me just use this opportunity to ignore the sadists I share an office with and say, "Chipotle in adobo! OTP!" and also, "Mmmmm, accelerated spicy bean soup!"

 [dremiel](#)

[February 20 2008, 19:58:48 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I'm not sure about OTP status but it's certainly better than *Chipotle* which sounds rather ominous, actually.

Happy to contribute to your air of unconvincing nonchalance.

 [cvillette](#)

[February 21 2008, 00:20:37 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

We did our best.

 [dremiel](#)

[February 21 2008, 00:22:11 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

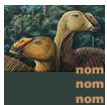
?

No touching that one!

 [colomon](#)

[February 20 2008, 16:02:50 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

How the heck do you make enough rice at once to last you a week? Industrial rice maker?



 [cvillette](#)

[February 20 2008, 19:30:32 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I don't, really. I just make as much as I can. But that's usually the big batch of the week, and if I need more I can make it in non-Godzilla quantities.

Also, there's pasta, polenta, bread, barley, quinoa... (The world is full of carbs! Yaay!)

 [Ometochtli](#)

[February 20 2008, 16:06:39 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

So how was the pie?



 [cvillette](#)

[February 20 2008, 16:08:16 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

See! Vultures! Circling!

It was very good *non-euphemistic* pie. As in, pie.

 Ometotchtli

February 20 2008, 16:09:06 UTC COLLAPSE

Awwwwwww. =:{ Was that all?



 cvillette

February 20 2008, 16:09:53 UTC COLLAPSE

And ice cream.

 Ometotchtli

February 20 2008, 16:10:53 UTC COLLAPSE

Gooooood ice cream?

 cvillette

February 20 2008, 16:11:19 UTC COLLAPSE

dignified! *silence!*

 Ometotchtli

February 20 2008, 16:12:01 UTC COLLAPSE

Oooh! Louder than words!

 trolldatz

February 20 2008, 16:12:46 UTC COLLAPSE

Awww, look at all that subtext. There was nervous.

 Ometotchtli

February 20 2008, 16:14:07 UTC COLLAPSE

Nervous is cute. Unless you drop things.

Did you drop things?

 cvillette

February 20 2008, 16:17:34 UTC COLLAPSE


* * *



 cvillette

February 20 2008, 16:17:49 UTC COLLAPSE

No.

 [trollcatz](#)

[February 20 2008, 16:18:50 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

What *did* you do?

I mean, besides not go home?

 [cvillette](#)

[February 20 2008, 16:20:25 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Just because I didn't stay up all night posting doesn't mean I didn't go home.

 [trollcatz](#)

[February 20 2008, 16:22:39 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

'Course not! I would never think that!

Wabbit told me which shirts were in your go bag.

 [cvillette](#)

[February 20 2008, 16:24:56 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Oh, darn, look at the time! Must go down to records and pick up those files before they all go to lunch!

 [Ometotchtli](#)

[February 20 2008, 16:25:31 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

We'll be here when you get back.

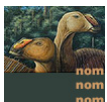
 [inaurolillium](#)

[February 20 2008, 20:27:59 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Don't forget those of us out in internets-land. C'mon, give, inquiring minds want to know!

Also, they're pricey, but various Japanese companies making very nice rice cookers that have timers and different settings for different kinds of rice (and porridge, but I'm not certain what *kind* of porridge), and fuzzy logic that has so far manage to keep my rice warm without burning it. You can set it in the morning and have fresh rice when you get home. Or, if you're me, set it before bed, make onigiri, and have snacks/lunch for your day.

Speaking of which, my rice has now been sitting there a while, and i should go make those onigiri. But I wanna know what happened, too! Don't make me threaten to withhold cake!



 [cvillette](#)

[February 21 2008, 00:24:19 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

A rice cooker with a timer! Now there's a smart thing.


Also, onigiri, yum!

 cjtremlett

February 21 2008, 01:43:18 UTC COLLAPSE

Oh, gawd, you don't have a Japanese rice cooker with a timer? I'm shocked!

I lived in Japan for two years. Those things are -essential- and come in sizes big enough to feed multi-generation families. Set up so that you can cook however much or little as you want, set it up in the morning, and have it fresh and ready when you've gotten home, and gotten the rest of the meal together. They're beautiful things.

 trollicatz


February 21 2008, 00:27:31 UTC COLLAPSE

You know, I could call Tasha. I bet she'd tell me more than you would.

 cvillette

February 21 2008, 00:28:06 UTC COLLAPSE

lays ears flat

 trollicatz

February 21 2008, 00:30:31 UTC COLLAPSE

All right, all right. I'll use my mighty powers of observation at the gym.

 cvillette

February 21 2008, 00:36:57 UTC COLLAPSE

...

...

1. Opening expressions of mutual goodwill
2. Statements of intent
3. Outlining of expectations
4. Boundary negotiations
5. None of your beeswax

 trollicatz

February 21 2008, 00:38:01 UTC COLLAPSE

pets There, was that so hard?



[cvillette](#)

February 21 2008, 00:41:08 UTC

[COLLAPSE](#)

pbthpbthpbth



[Ometotchtli](#)

February 21 2008, 00:42:32 UTC

[COLLAPSE](#)

You know he's enjoying this, right?



[trollcatz](#)

February 21 2008, 00:43:14 UTC

[COLLAPSE](#)

Ee-yep.



[cvillette](#)

February 21 2008, 00:43:38 UTC

[COLLAPSE](#)

(shutup)



[txanne](#)

February 21 2008, 00:52:13 UTC

[COLLAPSE](#)

Awwwww! Cuteness!!



[inaurolillium](#)

February 21 2008, 02:48:59 UTC

[COLLAPSE](#)

Yay!

Clear negotiation *good*.

Also, you may have cake. I'd send you some of the cassis monster that's still in my fridge, but I don't think it would survive the trip.

Three things!

1) Okay, O., She Wants Revenge = yes. It's like the Eighties rose up from the grave and came looking

Experimental Whole Wheat Green Chile Robot Bread #1

Yes, baking with your hands is more fun. And the results have a better texture, and taste better.

[locked] Dream Journal

All right, unconscious mind. We're coming to an accommodation. If the dreams are you cleaning